

VII.—*Notices of Recent Ornithological Publications.*

## 1. ENGLISH.

THE expectations of ornithologists throughout the world by our late announcement of Messrs. Sclater and Salvin's projected work\* will not, we are sure, be disappointed by its appearance. The readers of 'The Ibis' know well the thorough manner in which these gentlemen are accustomed to deal with any subject they take up; and the letterpress of the first part of 'Exotic Ornithology' is as much superior to that which accompanies any of the 'Planches Enluminées' or 'Planches Coloriées' as the progress of science would warrant. The species represented in this part are:—

*Lipaugus unirufus*, *Scl.*

— *subalaris*, *Scl.*

— *rufescens*, *Scl.*

*Furnarius torridus*, *Scl. & Salv.*

*Xipholena atropurpurea* (*Max.*).

*Ptilogonys caudatus*, *Cab.*

*Vireolanius melitophrys*, *Bp.*

— *pulchellus*, *Scl. & Salv.*

all from that New World on which the affections of our friends the authors are so fixedly set. The figures are the best we have seen of Mr. Smit's drawing since he has been in this country; and though to an eye accustomed to the masterpieces of our great artist they may be deficient in life and picturesqueness, yet the structural peculiarities and details of plumage, the importance of which cannot be overrated, are well preserved; and we must also add that the copies we have seen do great credit to the colourer. The monographic character of the work is already shown, by the introduction of a synopsis of the known species of several of the genera illustrated. We trust that the authors and their enterprising publisher will receive ample encouragement from the public in their undertaking.

The first impressions of the "intelligent stranger," whose advent to London is the ever-recurring theme of so many newspaper-articles, might lead him to suppose, if he were an ornithologist, that in the vicinity of England's capital no birds but Sparrows are to be found; and certainly such busy scenes as

\* *Exotic Ornithology*, by PHILIP LUTLEY SCLATER, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.S., Secretary to the Zoological Society of London, and OSBERT SALVIN, M.A., F.Z.S., &c. Part I. October 1st, 1866. London. Imp. 4to.

are presented by railway-stations, like Camden Town and Clapham Junction, would fortify him in that belief. Nevertheless the unpretending and agreeable little book which Mr. Harting has just published\* shows that the metropolitan county is far from being wanting in localities of ornithological interest. One, at least, of the chief requirements of modern civilization provides haunts for species which other "improvements" might tend to banish. Water cannot be supplied to large towns without reservoirs; and such natural or artificial receptacles are often goodly lakes, as witness the one at Kingsbury, which, with its extent of many acres, offers attractions that few passing migrants of aquatic propensities seem able to resist. Of the 225 species which, according to Mr. Harting, have been observed in Middlesex, a very large proportion have occurred in this locality, and a view of it forms an appropriate frontispiece to the volume. Mr. Harting, we must say, seems to have admitted a few species on rather slight evidence—among them the first he mentions, *Aquila chrysaetus*. The anonymous gentleman who recognized this species on the wing must indeed be "well acquainted with the bird" to have distinguished it from the White-tailed Eagle. Mr. Harting, on the testimony of Edwards and Montagu, includes *Anthus ludovicianus*; but we would venture to suggest the far greater probability of the "Red Lark" of those two authors being the European *A. spinoletta*, which has been so long confounded with it, and which is recorded as having several times occurred in this country (*Cf.* Ibis, 1865, pp. 114–116). So also the Swallows with light chestnut underparts, which the author states that he has several times seen, are much more likely to have been examples of *Hirundo riocouri* s. *cahirica* (*Cf.* Ibis, 1866, p. 423) than the American *H. rufa*, or rather *H. horreorum*. We are glad to see that he disclaims *Progne purpurea* as Middlesaxon; for we have long thought that Mr. Yarrell had been rather too credulous as to the story he was told of that species occurring in England. We heartily con-

\* The Birds of Middlesex. A Contribution to the Natural History of the County. By JAMES EDMUND HARTING, F.Z.S. London: MDCCCLXVI. Post 8vo., pp. 284.

gratulate Mr. Harting on his publication, which shows that he is a most pains-taking and careful ornithologist.

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The Ornithological Ramble of our recently elected colleague Mr. Arthur Crichton\* will no doubt be received with much pleasure by a large circle of readers, though we must complain that the influence of the Destroying Angel seems rather to predominate over that of the Genius of Ornithology in his pages; but as it is some time since we have had any account of the Orkneys from a naturalist's point of view, we are the less inclined to be hard to please in this respect. We may, however, remark that our worthy friend the author is mistaken in supposing that he has "strictly adhered to Mr. Yarrell's nomenclature;" for wherever that differs from the very irregular List in common use, the latter is followed.

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The handsome volume recently brought out by Major King† contains an account of some of the birds of Canada, drawn up with more regard to scientific accuracy than is usual among sporting writers. Especially we must congratulate the gallant author on being aware that Wilson is not the latest or only authority on American ornithology—a piece of information certainly not possessed by several persons in this country who occasionally essay "to teach the young idea how to shoot." We have, however, to notice that Major King does not seem quite clearly to comprehend the grounds on which some ornithologists suppose that the Domestic Turkey has not been derived from the wild bird of Canada and the United States, but from that of Mexico (the *Meleagris mexicana* of Mr. Gould)—an opinion which may be correct or not, but one that is not influenced by the evidence adduced by the author, who is also, we think, somewhat premature in pronouncing the American *Anser gambeli* to be identical with the European *A. albifrons*, since he does

\* A Naturalist's Ramble to the Orcades. By A. W. CRICHTON, B.A., F.L.S., etc. London: 1866. Fcp. 8vo., pp. 132.

† The Sportsman and Naturalist in Canada. By Major W. ROSS KING, &c. &c., Illustrated with Coloured Plates and Woodcuts. London: 1866. Roy. 8vo., pp. 334.

not state that he has compared any series of examples from the two continents\*.

Mr. Lord's two volumes† contain a good deal that is interesting respecting the habits of many of the birds of Western North America, which have hitherto been merely known to us as names and nothing else; at the same time it is clear that the author's sympathies are rather with the furry and finny than the feathered portion of creation, and the last consequently comes off second or even third best. Mr. Lord has small reason to be grateful to his printer or wood-cutter; but his book will, we think, please many of our readers, as it has pleased ourselves. In the list of species observed by him, which were upwards of 220 in number, perhaps *Aphriza virgata* is the most worthy of note. He greatly doubts the supposed provident habits of *Melanerpes formicivorus* which have been mentioned by former writers; but his observations on the point are not altogether satisfactory.

## 2. FRENCH.

The 'Mémoires de la Société Impériale des Sciences Naturelles de Cherbourg' for last year contain an essay on the classification of the *Trochilidae* by Prof. Mulsant, with the assistance of MM. Jules and Edouard Verreaux. This paper, which has for its object to supply the want of an analytical arrangement of this numerous and difficult family, and to assign generic characters

\* We take this opportunity of saying, while remarking on the game-birds and wild fowl of North America (and the more so since an inquiry has been addressed to us on the subject by a correspondent in India), that the "Booming Swallow" mentioned by Lord Milton and Dr. Cheadle in their entertaining 'North-West Passage by Land,' is probably *Gallinago wilsoni*, or at least some Scolopacine species. The rapid and erratic flight of a cock Snipe in the breeding-season might naturally be ascribed by un-ornithological observers to a Swallow; and the drumming sound produced, as well, we believe, by the American as by the European species, might well give rise to the epithet by which these adventurous travellers distinguished it.

† The Naturalist in Vancouver Island and British Columbia. By JOHN KEAST LORD, F.Z.S., Naturalist to the British North American Boundary Commission. London: 1866. 2 vols, small 8vo.

to each of the groups which compose it, has also been separately published\*. The idea is indeed a sufficiently laudable one; for, much as these birds have been studied, scarcely any author has given more than a list of species grouped under a vast number of genera, a great many of which are merely nominal. Mr. Gould, it is true, in his 'Introduction to the *Trochilidae*' (*Cf. Ibis*, 1862, p. 73), gave characters to the genera which he was the first to introduce; but there he stopped short, and left undefined a large number separated by other naturalists, many of which stand upon no firmer ground than the bestowal of a name and the indication of a type. As the authors of the present publication state that it is the precursor of a more extended work on the Humming-birds, we trust they will pardon our pointing out what appear to be several blemishes in it, our only object in so doing being the hope that the forthcoming work may thereby be rendered more perfect.

We must first of all complain of what seems to us to be an extremely unnecessary innovation proposed by the authors. This is the inversion of the well-known and universally accepted meaning of the words *maxilla* and *mandibula* for the upper and lower portions of the bill respectively (p. 8, note 2). His fondness for entomological studies, in which he has achieved so great a reputation, has, no doubt, persuaded M. Mulsant to propose this alteration; but in reality it is very doubtful if there is any analogy, much less any homology, between the laterally-moving jaws of an insect and the vertically-moving mandibles of a bird, though even if such were the case it would hardly be sufficient reason for subverting what has been the practice of ornithologists for a century. It is also incumbent upon us, we think, to protest against the principle of changing the spelling of a name without regard being had to its derivation, but merely "pour en adoucir la prononciation," of which we have an example (p. 18, note) in the author's dropping the "m" from *Pygmornis*, and thereby entirely perverting the meaning of the term. What would M. Mulsant say if a similar liberty were taken with his

\* Essai d'une Classification Méthodique des Trochilidées ou Oiseaux-Mouches. Par E. MULSANT et JULES VERREAUX, EDOUARD VERREAUX. Paris. 8vo, pp. 98.

own name, and the letter "l," for instance, suppressed to render its utterance easier to English lips?

The value of a system is in its application; we will therefore examine a few of the genera adopted in this work, and we will take first *Leucolia*, Muls. & Verr. (p. 31). This genus contains *Dolerisca*, Cab., *Cyanomyia* (nec *Cyanomya*), Gould, *Leucippus*, Bp., and *Phlogophilus*, Gould, besides several species of *Thaumantias*, placed as if Mr. Gould had included them under *Cyanomyia*. The types of all these genera are included in the list of species forming *Leucolia*; surely, then, there was no need of inventing this additional name? The localities, too, of many of the species are wrongly assigned. *Dolerisca fallax* and *Cyanomyia quadricolor* are said to be from New Granada instead of from Venezuela and Mexico respectively; while *C. guatemalensis* (the *patria*, we should have thought, was sufficiently indicated by its name) is put down as coming from Mexico! *Thaumantias candidus*, too, is said to be from New Granada, which it certainly is not. We have also to inquire what has befallen the Peruvian *Cyanomyia cyanicollis* and the *Dolerisca cervina*, Gould (Introduction, p. 56)? Does M. Mulsant deny them specific rank, or have they accidentally escaped his notice?

As a further instance of the propriety of M. Mulsant's arrangement, we must mention that the two very closely allied birds *Erythronota edwardsi* and *E. niveiventris* are placed in different genera—the first in *Amazilia* (p. 35), the second in *Ariana* (p. 36), another new genus, the name of which should probably be correctly spelt *Ariadne*. Again, the very natural group *Panoplit*es, Gould, is scattered to the winds; of the three species composing it, *P. jardinii* is placed in a subgenus (*Galenia*) of *Florisuga* (p. 47); *P. matthewsi* is included, with a host of other genera, in *Clytolama* (p. 59); while *P. flavescens*—the type of the genus—constitutes by itself a genus upon which a new name, *Callidice* (p. 65), is bestowed!

Besides the two we have already mentioned, a considerable number of species seem to be wholly omitted. We have been unable to find *Heliomaster longirostris* and its allies. On the other hand, we have here and there new species inserted without any descriptions at all. Does not M. Mulsant know that, what-

ever may be the practice in entomology, the publication of MS. names without descriptions has always been regarded by ornithologists as the one unpardonable offence?

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We have to notice the 'Mémoires Scientifiques' of M. François Pollen—a series of papers contributed to the 'Bulletin de la Société d'Acclimatation et d'Histoire Naturelle de l'Île de la Réunion' and the 'Bulletin de la Société des Sciences et Arts' of the same island, one of which contains the description of a new Sparrow-Hawk from Madagascar, to which the author assigns the name *Nisuides* (rectius *Nisoides*) *moreli*, founding a new genus for its reception. As, however, we understand that M. Pollen is preparing a detailed work on the ornithology of Madagascar and the Mascarene Islands, we forbear at present to say more on the subject, knowing that we shall have to return to it.

### 3. AMERICAN.

The 'Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History' for the past year contain a list of birds from Porto Rico, presented to the Smithsonian Institution by Messrs. Swift and Latimer, drawn up by Dr. Bryant, in which three species, *Tyrannus antillarum*, *Todus hypochondriacus*, and *Tanagra (Spindalis) portoricensis*, appear to be described as new. The first is presumed to be the *Myiarchus* sp.? of Mr. E. C. Taylor's list (Ibis, 1864, p. 109), "and not unlikely the same as the Tobago Bird in Jardine's catalogue of the birds of that Island;" but our good friend is very chary of his references, and does not specify which of the three Tyrants mentioned by Sir William (Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist. xx. pp. 329, 330) it is that he means, if, indeed, he means them at all,—a fact much to be regretted, as the circumstance of a species ranging from Tobago to Porto Rico, though not, we believe, unexampled, is worthy of note. Besides these three species, Dr. Bryant describes local varieties of several others, *Mimus polyglottus*, *Certhiola flaveola*, *Fringilla (Phonipara) zena*, *Icterus dominicensis*, and *Saurothera vieilloti*, each of which, except the last, distinguished as "var. *rufescens*," he designates as "var. *portoricensis*." These we believe to be the chief objects of

interest in this paper ; but we are by no means sure of it, as the author, having apparently no pity for reviewers or recorders, omits to lighten their labours by the usual and simple mode of indicating the novelties he introduces.

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The same Journal contains also "A List of Vertebrates observed at Okkak, Labrador," by Mr. Weiz, with annotations by Mr. A. S. Packard. Unfortunately the latter do not extend to the Birds, of which consequently we have but a bare list of names of the species, which are confounded in many cases with their European representatives, though, as the editor justly remarks, "experts in American zoology will readily correct" such mistakes. The list shows the *Ornis* of Labrador to be much as might have been expected. Its most useful part is perhaps the information it gives as to the native (Eskimaux) names.

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Mr. Lawrence continues his unwearied labours in elucidating the Central and South American avifauna, and, in a paper read to the Lyceum of Natural History of New York in June last and printed in their 'Annals,' describes seven more new species of birds from that region. These are *Campylorhynchus brevipennis* from Venezuela, *Automolus rufescens*, *Grallaricula costaricensis*, and *Eupherusa cupreiceps* from Costa Rica, *Grallaria gigantea* from Ecuador, *Phaethornis cassini* from New Granada, and *Geotrygon veraguensis* from Veragua.

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From a paper of some considerable length in the 'Proceedings of the Philadelphia Academy' we are very glad to learn that our contributor Dr. Coues intends publishing a full account of the birds of the remote region where he was lately quartered, and of his journey to and from which he gave such an interesting description in the pages of this Magazine. "The Prodrôme of a work on the Ornithology of Arizona Territory," as the separately printed copies of this paper are headed, is, however, in itself a very elaborate performance, and one which is entitled to the highest praise. But we must here be brief, and content ourselves with mentioning that Dr. Coues's notes refer to no

less than 244 species\*, of which four (*Mitrephorus pallescens*, *Vireo plumbeus*, *V. vicinior*, and *V. pusillus*) are now described as new, and a variety of *Chrysomitris mexicana* distinguished by the agnomen *arizonæ*. The first of these is the bird which the author in this Journal (*Ibis*, 1865, p. 537) provisionally called *Empidonax pygmæus*; and we must say we wish he had not thought it expedient to change its specific name, since his notice of it seems to us to have been sufficiently diagnostic. Dr. Coues also founds three new genera—*Micrathene* with *Athene whitneyi* as its type, *Asyndesmus* with *Picus torquatus*, and *Podasocys* with *Charadrius montanus*.

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If the paper last noticed gives the result of Dr. Coues's labours in the field, the continuation of his "Review of the Family *Procellariidæ*" furnishes a renewed proof of the value of his studies in the closet. The first and second parts of this carefully worked-up paper, which by some mischance escaped notice in our pages, appeared in the Philadelphia 'Proceedings' for 1864; the third, fourth, and fifth portions are contained in the same publication for last year, and exhibit the same amount of patient investigation of this difficult family. The whole essay almost defies a reviewer to give within reasonable limits any satisfactory account of it. Perhaps for ornithologists in this country it may be most useful to mention that one of the results at which the author has arrived is, that the generic name *Thalassidroma* must be entirely suppressed, as being synonymous with *Procellaria* proper; and in its stead he proposes to use the term *Cymochorea*. Several new species of the group are described, and a great many rectifications in the synonymy of those that are known are suggested. No person writing on the Petrels should fail to make himself acquainted with this paper.

#### 4. AUSTRALASIAN.

It is with extreme pleasure that in these our notices of recent publications we have for the first time to appropriate a section

\* 245 species are actually enumerated; but one, *Certhiola flaveola*, is, as we are kindly informed by Professor Baird, included by mistake.

to the works of our fellow labourers at the antipodes. No doubt in a few years we shall have a fine crop of ornithological papers springing from the seed sown throughout those flourishing communities; but at present the firstfruits are offered to us by Mr. Walter Buller, a gentleman whose name is indeed comparatively unknown among ornithologists, but whose 'Essay on the Ornithology of New Zealand'\* obtained a Silver Medal at the Exhibition held in that colony two years ago. In this paper, apart from its general merits, of which we will not now speak, no less than nine new species belonging to one or other of the islands are indicated, and seven of them duly named and described by the author. These are as follows:—*Anthornis auriocula* from the Chatham Islands; *Gerygone assimilis*, *Mimus* (?) *carunculatus*, *Creadion cinereus*, *Nestor superbus* from "the alpine heights of the South Island;" *Rallus featherstonii* and *Podiceps hectori*. We have placed a mark of doubt after the generic name of the new so-called *Mimus*, because we deem it highly improbable that a member of that American form should be found in New Zealand; and the species will no doubt eventually be referred elsewhere. The discovery of a new *Nestor* is extremely interesting, and several specimens of it are said to have been obtained. One of the two birds not described in the paper before us is a large *Strix*, an inhabitant of the subalpine parts of the Canterbury province, where it appears to have been discovered, though not obtained, by Dr. Haast, in honour of whom it has been provisionally named *S. haasti*. The remaining undescribed bird is a *Lestris*, considerably larger than *L. antarcticus*, found by Dr. Hector in Dusky Bay. Mr. Buller gives, as might be expected, some interesting particulars of the different species of *Apteryx*; but no specimen of *A. maxima* seems yet to have gladdened the eyes of a colonist†. The number of New Zealand birds at present known to him is 133; "and there is every reason

\* New Zealand Exhibition, 1865. Essay on the Ornithology of New Zealand. By WALTER BULLER, Esq., F.L.S. Printed for the Commissioners. Dunedin, Otago, N. Z.: 1865, 8vo. pp. 20.

† Mr. Buller's letter to Archdeacon Hadfield, printed in the 'Zoologist' for 1864, p. 9197, should not be overlooked by any one interested in the subject of the brevipennate birds of New Zealand.

to believe that, as the country becomes more thoroughly explored, the list will be considerably augmented ;” meanwhile, considering the rage for acclimatization, we fear the number will be considerably diminished. Even now Mr. Buller tells us that *Coturnix novæ-zelandiæ* is “fast disappearing,” and is only met with in the unfrequented parts of the South Island, having become almost, if not quite, extinct in the North.

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The ‘Proceedings of the Philosophical Society of Sydney’ contain a paper, read on the 5th of July, 1865, by our contributor Mr. E. P. Ramsay, “On Australian Oology,” which is illustrated by a plate admirably drawn by Miss Helena Scott, well known to entomologists as one of the artists of the ‘Australian Lepidoptera,’ and as admirably coloured. The species treated of are *Pomatorhinus temporalis*, *P. superciliosus*, *Xanthomyza phrygia*, *Ptilotis fusca*, *P. auricomis*, *Sisura inquieta*, *Eopsaltria australis*, and *Micræca macroptera*, respecting the breeding-habits of all of which very full details, and figures of one or two specimens of their eggs, are given. Egg-seekers may wish that many more species would take the one last named as their model; for Mr. Ramsay says, “any one accustomed to birds’ nesting can tell in a very short time whether the birds have a nest or not; and when this fact is settled, nothing is easier than to watch the birds until they go to it.” The author gives, in the case of *Xanthomyza phrygia*, another instance of the peculiarity possessed by many Australian birds of occasionally absenting themselves for a time from a particular locality where they had before been abundant, and then visiting it again in immense numbers. It may be a tolerably safe conjecture to suppose that such irregular movements have relation to the plenty or scarcity of food; but the subject is one that would bear a good deal of investigation, and we doubt not Mr. Ramsay will give it his best attention whenever the opportunity offers itself again.